



[54] COMPOSITE PRISM AND OPTICAL PICKUP
USING THE SAME

0 612 068 A3 8/0994 European Pat. Off.

8.129544 12/0996 Japan.
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[75] Inventors: Hirayasu Tsuji, Saitama-gun, Toshiro
Fukuzawa, Kyoto, Shiga Kenan, Kodo;
Norimoto Nochi, Kanagawa, Shiga
Uchida, Tachibana Kenenaga, both of
Neyagawa, all of Japan

Primary Examiner—Paul W. Hinder
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Patterson & Wadell, L.L.P.

[73] Assignee: Matsushita Electric Industrial Co.,
Ltd., Japan

[57] ABSTRACT

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[31] Int. Cl. G11B 7/00
[32] U.S. Cl. 369/112, 369/103, 369/109
[58] Field of Search 369/110, 112, 44, 23, 44, 24, 103

[56] References Cited

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS
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A prism and an optical pickup employing such prism includes a parallel prism having a polarization beam splitter film and a reflection film. The polarization beam splitter film is formed on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section, and consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of Si and SiO₂ (x<0.5) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The reflection film is formed on an angled plane of the same glass material approximately parallel to the angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter film is formed, and consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of metal Si and oxide SiO₂ (x<0.5) as a high refractive film and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films as a relatively low refractive film.

23 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets

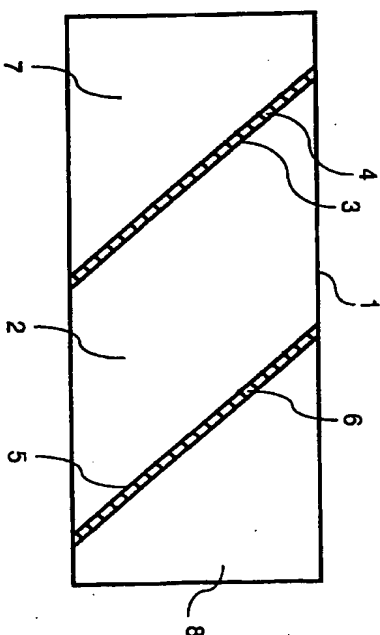
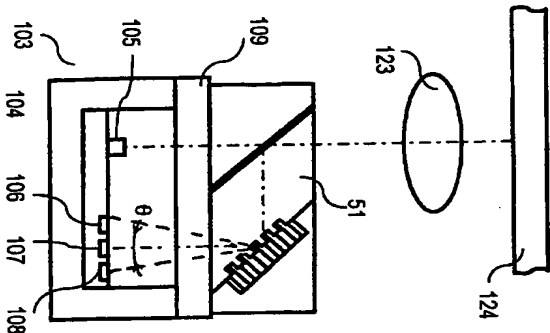


FIG. 1

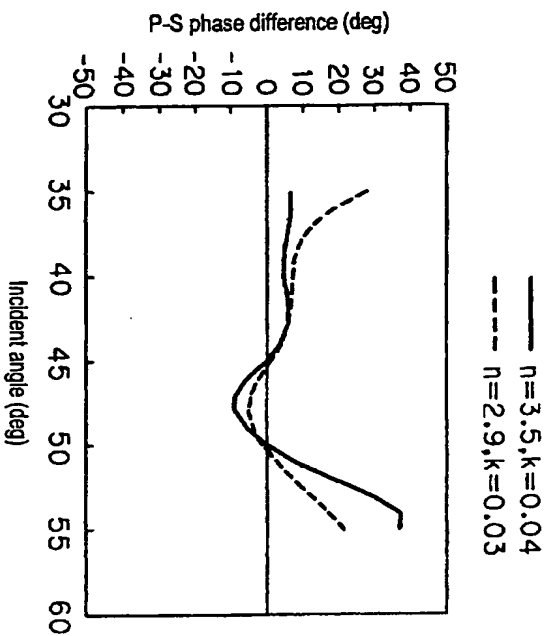


FIG. 2

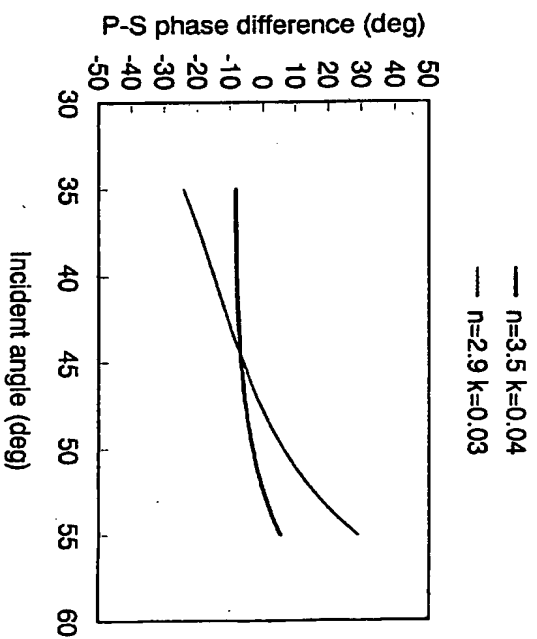


FIG. 3

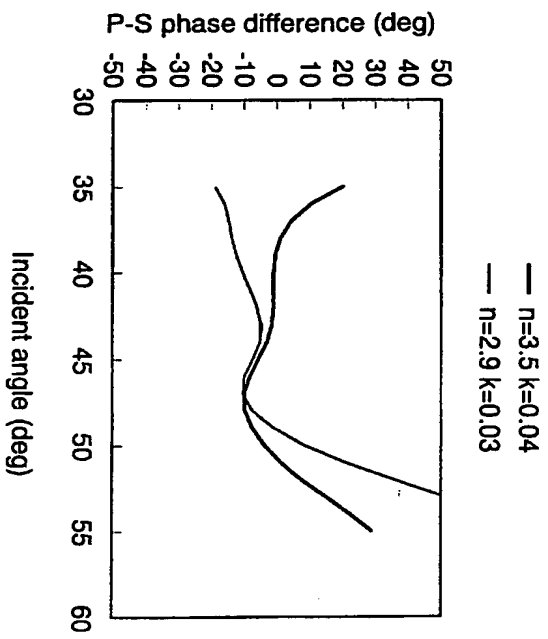


FIG. 4

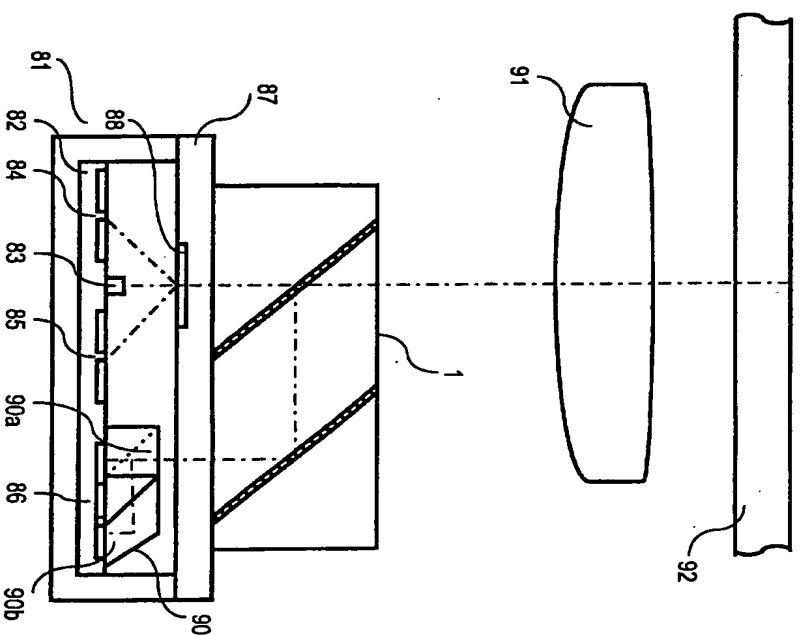


FIG. 5

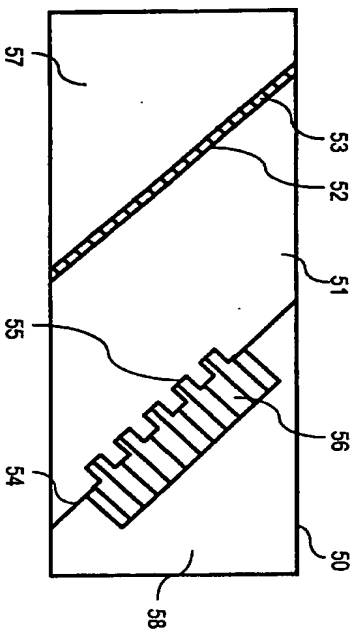


FIG. 6

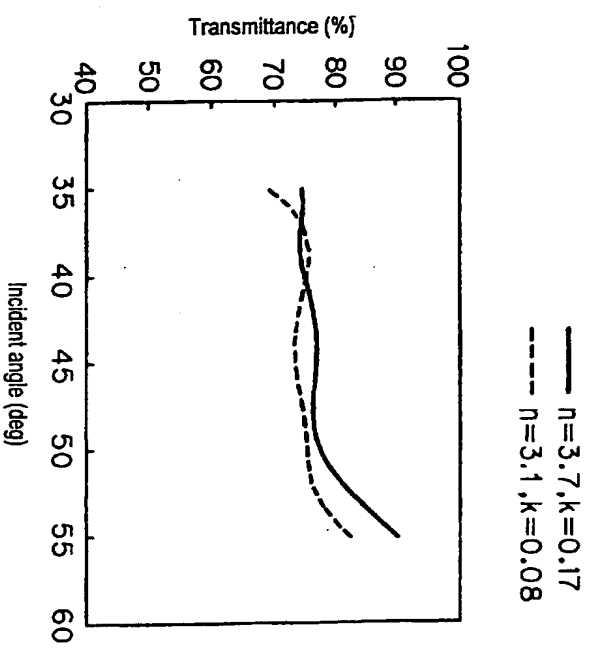


FIG. 7

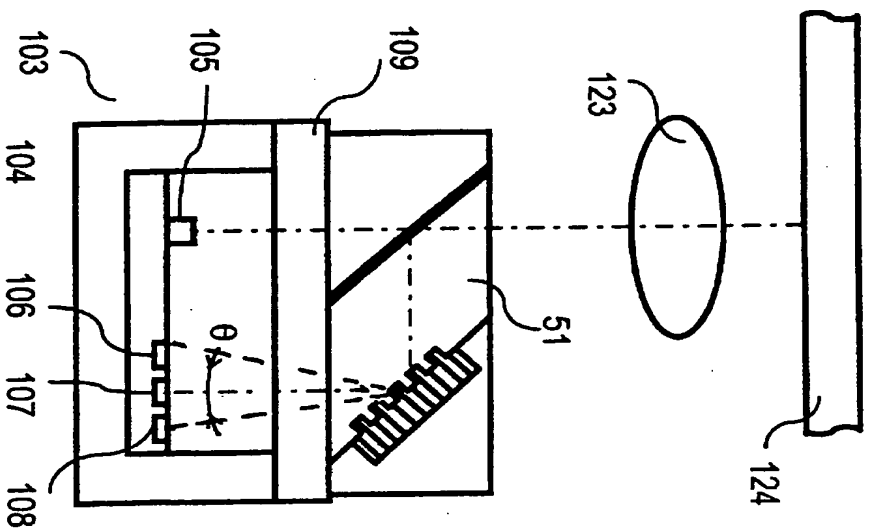


FIG. 8

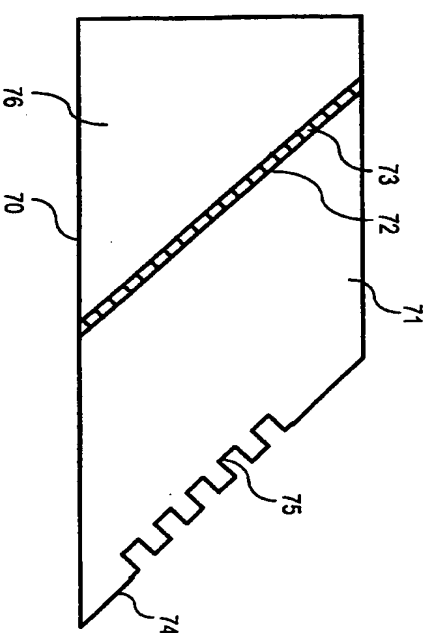


FIG. 9

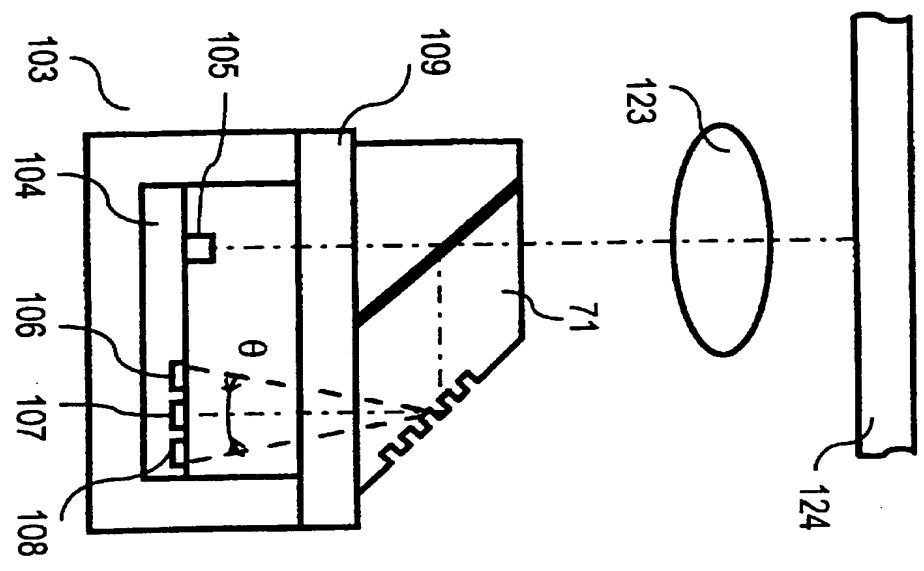


FIG. 10

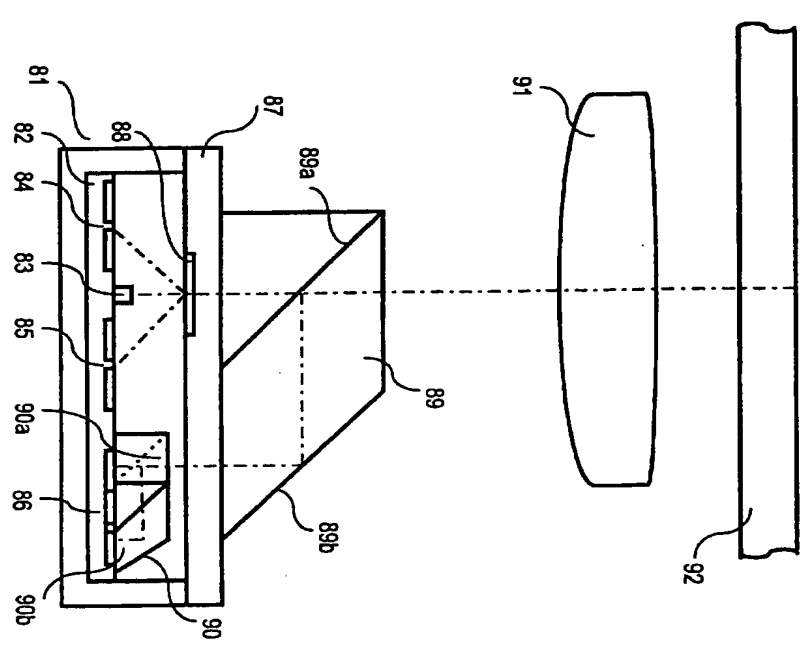


FIG. 11A
PRIOR ART

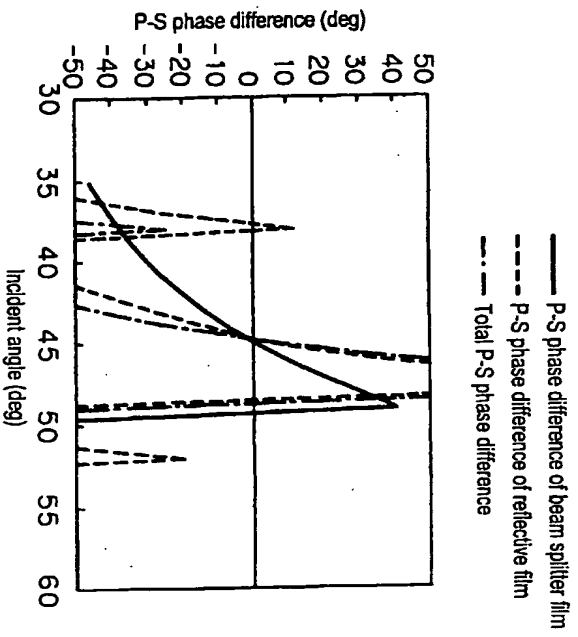


FIG. 13 PRIOR ART

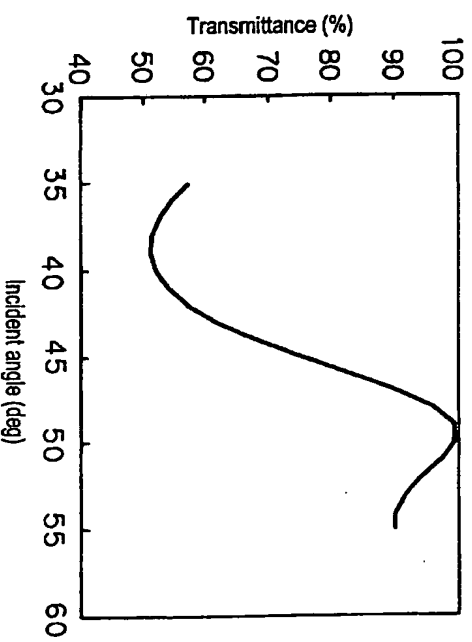


FIG. 14 PRIOR ART

COMPOSITE PRISM AND OPTICAL PICKUP USING THE SAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of prisms, and optical pickups employing prisms for integrating diffracted light.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

At present, magneto-optical disks, write-once optical disks and compact disks (CDs) are already commercialized as optical disks for recording and reproducing information via irradiation of laser beams. There is, however, increasing interest in digital video disks (DVDs) as the next generation recording medium.

An optical pickup is a device for recording and reproducing information to and from optical disks. Increasing importance is now being placed on development of technology for miniaturization of optical pickups in response to the increasing trend towards integration.

One example of an optical pickup is Japanese Patent Application 47-134642, which discloses a small optical pickup for magneto-optical disks shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B. FIG. 11A is a simplified sectional view of an optical system of the above prior art. FIG. 11B is a top view of a light-receiving element light emitting element, and analyzer. In FIGS. 11A and 11B a substrate 82 is provided inside an optical module 81. A laser diode 83 is the light emitting element and photo detectors 84, 85, and 86 as the light receiving elements are disposed on the substrate 82. The laser diode 83 has a structure which allows, for example, a concave portion having a 45° angled plane (not illustrated) to be disposed on one part of the substrate 82, and a light emitting chip (not illustrated) to be disposed inside that concave portion for reflecting light radiated from the light emitting chip on the 45° angled plane, thus emitting the beam upward. Each of the photo detectors 84 and 85 consists of six components: 84a to 84f and 85a to 85f, respectively. The photo analyzer 86 consists of two components 86a and 86b which are inclined approximately 45° with respect to the array direction of the photo detectors 84 and 85.

The transparent substrate 87 is made of glass or resin, and has a hologram diffraction grating 88 on the side facing the laser diode 83. The hologram diffraction grating 88 has a lens effect, giving different focal lengths to a primary diffraction light which have been diffracted between approximately 5° and 30°. The transparent substrate 87 is provided over the optical module 81 to seal the inside of the optical module 81. A polarizing prism 89 has a triangular cross-section, formed by bonding a triangular prism having a right triangle cross-section and an approximate parallel plane having an approximate 45° cross section. A polarization beam splitter film consisting of multiple layers of a range of thin dielectric films is shown in Table 1 is applied to a bonded portion 89a of the crystal polarizer 89 in such a way, for example, that the transmittance of p-polarized light is approximately 70%, the reflectance of p-polarized light is approximately 30%, and the reflectance of s-polarized light is approximately 100% when p-polarized light is emitted from the laser diode 83.

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2

TABLE 1

Thin substrate	
n = 1.455	
Substrate	119 nm
1st layer	TO ₂
2nd layer	SO ₂
3rd layer	TO ₂
4th layer	SO ₂
5th layer	TO ₂
6th layer	SO ₂
7th layer	TO ₂
8th layer	SO ₂
9th layer	TO ₂
Substrate	119 nm
n = 1.455	
Substrate	119 nm
1st layer	TO ₂
2nd layer	SO ₂
3rd layer	TO ₂
4th layer	SO ₂
5th layer	TO ₂
6th layer	SO ₂
7th layer	TO ₂
8th layer	SO ₂
9th layer	TO ₂
Substrate	119 nm

The polarizing prism 89 is integrated onto the transparent substrate 87, and an angled plane 89b inclines toward the inside of the optical module 81. A reflective film consisting of multiple layers of a range of thin dielectric films is shown in Table 2 is applied to the surface of the angled plane 89b.

TABLE 2

Thin substrate	
n = 1.455	
Substrate	119 nm
1st layer	TO ₂
2nd layer	SO ₂
3rd layer	TO ₂
4th layer	SO ₂
5th layer	TO ₂
6th layer	SO ₂
7th layer	TO ₂
8th layer	SO ₂
9th layer	TO ₂
10th layer	SO ₂
11th layer	TO ₂
12th layer	SO ₂
13th layer	TO ₂
14th layer	SO ₂
15th layer	TO ₂
16th layer	SO ₂
17th layer	TO ₂
18th layer	SO ₂
19th layer	TO ₂
20th layer	SO ₂
21st layer	TO ₂
22nd layer	SO ₂
23rd layer	TO ₂
24th layer	SO ₂
25th layer	TO ₂
26th layer	SO ₂
27th layer	TO ₂
28th layer	SO ₂
29th layer	TO ₂
30th layer	SO ₂
31st layer	TO ₂
32nd layer	SO ₂
33rd layer	TO ₂
34th layer	SO ₂
35th layer	TO ₂
36th layer	SO ₂
37th layer	TO ₂
38th layer	SO ₂
39th layer	TO ₂
40th layer	SO ₂
41st layer	TO ₂
42nd layer	SO ₂
43rd layer	TO ₂
44th layer	SO ₂
45th layer	TO ₂
46th layer	SO ₂
47th layer	TO ₂
48th layer	SO ₂
49th layer	TO ₂
50th layer	SO ₂
51st layer	TO ₂
52nd layer	SO ₂
53rd layer	TO ₂
54th layer	SO ₂
55th layer	TO ₂
56th layer	SO ₂
57th layer	TO ₂
58th layer	SO ₂
59th layer	TO ₂
60th layer	SO ₂
61st layer	TO ₂
62nd layer	SO ₂
63rd layer	TO ₂
64th layer	SO ₂
65th layer	TO ₂
66th layer	SO ₂
67th layer	TO ₂
68th layer	SO ₂
69th layer	TO ₂
70th layer	SO ₂
71st layer	TO ₂
72nd layer	SO ₂
73rd layer	TO ₂
74th layer	SO ₂
75th layer	TO ₂
76th layer	SO ₂
77th layer	TO ₂
78th layer	SO ₂
79th layer	TO ₂
80th layer	SO ₂
81st layer	TO ₂
82nd layer	SO ₂
83rd layer	TO ₂
84th layer	SO ₂
85th layer	TO ₂
86th layer	SO ₂
87th layer	TO ₂
88th layer	SO ₂
89th layer	TO ₂
90th layer	SO ₂
91st layer	TO ₂
92nd layer	SO ₂
93rd layer	TO ₂
94th layer	SO ₂
95th layer	TO ₂
96th layer	SO ₂
97th layer	TO ₂
98th layer	SO ₂
99th layer	TO ₂
100th layer	SO ₂
101st layer	TO ₂
102nd layer	SO ₂
103rd layer	TO ₂
104th layer	SO ₂
105th layer	TO ₂
106th layer	SO ₂
107th layer	TO ₂
108th layer	SO ₂
109th layer	TO ₂
110th layer	SO ₂
111th layer	TO ₂
112th layer	SO ₂
113th layer	TO ₂
114th layer	SO ₂
115th layer	TO ₂
116th layer	SO ₂
117th layer	TO ₂
118th layer	SO ₂
119th layer	TO ₂
120th layer	SO ₂
121st layer	TO ₂
122nd layer	SO ₂
123rd layer	TO ₂
124th layer	SO ₂
125th layer	TO ₂
126th layer	SO ₂
127th layer	TO ₂
128th layer	SO ₂
129th layer	TO ₂
130th layer	SO ₂
131st layer	TO ₂
132nd layer	SO ₂
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143rd layer	TO ₂
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163rd layer	TO ₂
164th layer	SO ₂
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166th layer	SO ₂
167th layer	TO ₂
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179th layer	TO ₂
180th layer	SO ₂
181st layer	TO ₂
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188th layer	SO ₂
189th layer	TO ₂
190th layer	SO ₂
191st layer	TO ₂
192nd layer	SO ₂
193rd layer	TO ₂
194th layer	SO ₂
195th layer	TO ₂
196th layer	SO ₂
197th layer	TO ₂
198th layer	SO ₂
199th layer	TO ₂
200th layer	SO ₂
201st layer	TO ₂
202nd layer	SO ₂
203rd layer	TO ₂
204th layer	SO ₂
205th layer	TO ₂
206th layer	SO ₂
207th layer	TO ₂
208th layer	SO ₂
209th layer	TO ₂
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213rd layer	TO ₂
214th layer	SO ₂
215th layer	TO ₂
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217th layer	TO ₂
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220th layer	SO ₂
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227th layer	TO ₂
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254th layer	SO ₂
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275th layer	TO ₂
276th layer	SO ₂
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279th layer	TO ₂
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364th layer	SO ₂
365th layer	TO ₂
366th layer	SO ₂
367th layer	TO ₂
368th layer	SO ₂
369th layer	TO ₂
370th layer	SO ₂ </

5

the laser diode 105 and photo detectors 106, 107, and 108 into the optical module 100, and manufacturing costs have been reduced due to lack of need for extreme precision in the positioning of the photo detectors 106, 107, and 108.

Integration of components of optical pickups is achieved by employing a semiconductor laser which essentially generates diffused light, spreading to a certain range, as a light source. Therefore, the optical characteristics of components of optical pickups are strongly affected by the incident angle.

In the optical pickup for magneto-optical disks shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B, a phase difference may occur between the p-polarization light and s-polarization light responsive to broad incident angles because the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film disposed respectively on the face 89a of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section and the plane 89b which is approximately parallel to the plane 89a only consist of dielectric films.

FIG. 13 shows the phase difference between the p-polarized light and s-polarized light (hereafter referred to as the "p-s phase difference") of light reflected on the polarization beam splitter film, the p-s phase difference of light reflected on the reflection film, and the total of the p-s phase difference of the polarization beam splitter film and of the reflection film. This explains the dependence of the p-s phase difference on the incident angle when the light reflected on a disk enters a photo detector. As shown in FIG. 13, the p-s phase difference of the polarization beam splitter film is -50° to $+40^\circ$ when the light incident angle is $\pm 10^\circ$ with respect to the prism, therefore $45^\circ \pm 50^\circ$ with respect to the optical film. The p-s phase difference of the reflection film exceeds -50° and the p-s phase difference of the light entering the photo detector (shown as the total p-s phase difference in FIG. 13) also exceeds -50° to $+50^\circ$.

To satisfactorily reproduce the information recorded on a magneto-optical disk, the p-s phase difference when the light enters the photo detector may require to be within -20° to $+20^\circ$. With the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film of the prior art, it may be difficult to design an optical pickup which achieves the above preferable range for diffused light.

In the optical pickup for DVDRs as shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B, transmittance of the p-polarized light in the polarization beam splitter film greatly depends on the incident angle, as shown in FIG. 14, when the light enters at a wide incident angle (the incident angle to the optical film is $45^\circ \pm 7^\circ$ when the incident angle to the prism is $1^\circ \pm 6^\circ$). This may cause unsatisfactory reproduction due to reduced light entering the light receiving area.

Furthermore, since the hologram diffraction grating 120 is disposed on the transparent substrate 109 which seals the inside of the optical module, it may be necessary to broaden the diffraction angle 0 of the diffracted light, i.e. to narrow the pitch of the diffraction grating, when the distance between the hologram diffraction grating 120 and photo detectors 106, 107, and 108 is short. This may cause difficulties in manufacturing such diffraction gratings, resulting in failure to achieve a satisfactory optical pickup.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention offers a magneto-optical pickup which reduces the p-s phase difference.

The present invention further offers an optical pickup for DVDRs which improves the light efficiency during reproduction and permits a wider diffraction grating.

invention comprises an approximate parallel prism having a polarization beam splitter disposed on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section and a reflection film on an angled plane which is approximately parallel to the angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter is disposed in the same glass material. The polarization beam splitter consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) (hereafter "semipervious film") and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The reflection film consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) (hereafter "semipervious film") as high refractive film and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films as a relatively low refractive film. In the approximate parallel prism of the magneto-optical pickup of the present invention, desirable reflective index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$.

To achieve the aforementioned effect in an optical pickup for DVDRs, the prism and optical pickup of the present invention comprises a parallel prism having a polarization beam splitter disposed on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section, a hologram diffraction grating disposed on an angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter is disposed, and a reflection film on the hologram diffraction grating. The polarization beam splitter consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The reflection film consists of a single metal film or multi-layer film of a metal film and dielectric film.

In the approximate parallel prism of the optical pickup of the present invention, desirable reflective index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$.

The reflection film is preferably made of an Ag film. It is more preferable to form a patterned reflection film by precision processing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a sectional view of a prism in accordance with a first exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the p-s phase difference of a polarization beam splitter film in accordance with the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the p-s phase difference of a reflection film in accordance with the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 4 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the p-s phase difference of the light passing through the polarization beam splitter film and the reflection film in accordance with the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a sectional view of an optical pickup in accordance with a second exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a sectional view of a prism in accordance with a third exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 7 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the transmittance of the prism in accordance with the third exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

7

FIG. 8 is a sectional view of an optical pickup in accordance with a fourth exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a sectional view of a prism of an optical pickup in accordance with a fifth exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a sectional view of an optical pickup in accordance with a sixth exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11A is a simplified sectional view of an optical system of the prior art.

FIG. 11B is a top view of FIG. 11A illustrating a light receiving element, light emitting element, and photo detector of the prior art.

FIG. 13 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the p-s phase difference of a prism of the prior art.

FIG. 14 shows the dependence on the incident angle of the transmittance of a polarization beam splitter film of the prior art.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention employs a parallel prism comprising a polarization beam splitter film on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section and a reflection film disposed on an angled plane approximately parallel to the angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter film is disposed. The polarization beam splitter film consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The reflection film consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) as a high refractive film and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films as a relatively low refractive film. Changes in optical characteristics can be prevented although the light incident angle changes, by employing a composite film of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) in the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film. In other words, the composite film of the present invention has high refractive index n and low absorption coefficient k for reducing the dependence on the incident angle.

The refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter of the optical pickup of the present invention are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$. The refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the reflection film are also $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$. The above values of the refractive index and absorption coefficients assure that the dependence on the incident angle is reduced and efficiency is improved.

The present invention according to one embodiment employs a parallel prism comprising a polarization beam splitter film disposed on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section, a hologram diffraction grating disposed on an angled plane in the same glass material approximately parallel to the angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter is disposed, and a reflection film disposed on the hologram diffraction grating. The polarization beam splitter film consists of a multi-layer film of a composite film made of a mixture of Si

8

and SiO_2 (<40.5) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The reflection film consists of a single metal film or a multi-layer film of a metal film and dielectric film.

Changes in optical characteristics can be prevented, although the light incident angle changes, by employing the composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) in the polarization beam splitter film. In other words, the composite film of the present invention has high refractive index n and low absorption coefficient k for reducing the dependence on the incident angle. Since the hologram grating is disposed on the parallel prism, the optical distance between the hologram grating and the photo detector can be made longer, enabling the reduction of the diffraction angle θ of the hologram diffraction grating. This allows broader pitch of the hologram pattern for facilitating the creation of hologram grating in production.

The present invention according to another embodiment is an optical pickup in which the metal film in the polarization beam splitter has the refractive index n of $n \geq 2.8$ and the absorption coefficient k of $k \leq 0.3$. The dependence on the incident angle and efficiency can be improved by limiting the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k to the above ranges.

In one aspect of the present invention the metal film in the reflection film is made of Ag. The use of Ag for the metal film of the reflection film reduces the dependence of the reflectance on the incident angle and improves reflectance.

The present invention according to still another embodiment is an optical pickup comprising a patterned reflection film on the hologram diffraction grating by providing the reflection film only on the hologram diffraction grating. Pitting of the reflection film can be thus suppressed and satisfactory optical pickup can be realized although the reflection film and glass material show poor adhesion.

The present invention according to another embodiment employs a parallel prism comprising a polarization beam splitter disposed on an angled plane of a parallelogram glass material having an approximate 45° cross-section and a hologram diffraction grating disposed on an angled plane approximately parallel to the angled plane on which the polarization beam splitter is disposed in the same glass material. The polarization beam splitter film consists of a multi-layer of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 (<40.5) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films. The refractive index n of the glass material is $n \geq 1.6$. A small optical pickup with higher efficiency and smaller dependence on the incident angle can be achieved without using a reflection film for adjusting the reflectance of the hologram diffraction grating.

According to one aspect of the above embodiment, the present invention is an optical pickup in which the refractive index n, absorption coefficient k, and total thickness d of the metal film in the polarization beam splitter is set to $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$. The dependence on the incident angle and efficiency can be improved by limiting the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k to the above ranges.

The exemplary embodiments of the present invention are explained with reference to FIGS. 1 to 10 next.

FIG. 1 shows a sectional view of a prism employed in an optical pickup for magneto-optical disks in a first exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIGS. 2 to 6 show the dependence on the incident angle of the p-s phase difference of the prism.

As shown in FIG. 1, a prism 1 comprises a parallelogram-shaped glass material 2 having an approximate 45° cross-

section. The refractive index n of the glass material 2 is 1.635. A polarization beam splitter film 4 consisting of a composite film made of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 ($n \approx 1.5$) (hereafter "composite film"), and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films such as Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Y_2O_3 , and TiO_2 films, 5 shown in Table 4 and Table 5, is disposed on an angled plane 3 of the glass material 2.

TABLE 4

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.635$
1st layer	Al_2O_3 20 nm
2nd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 25 nm
3rd layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
4th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 25 nm
5th layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
6th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
7th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
8th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
9th layer	Y_2O_3 100 nm
10th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.635$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.04$ ($n = 0.2$)

TABLE 5

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.635$
1st layer	Al_2O_3 20 nm
2nd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 25 nm
3rd layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
4th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 25 nm
5th layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
6th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
7th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
8th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
9th layer	Y_2O_3 100 nm
10th layer	SiO_2 180 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.635$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.04$ ($n = 0.2$)

The polarization beam splitter film 4 shown in Tables 4 and 5 consists of a 10-layer film.

A reflection film 6, comprising a multi-layer film of a composite film made of Si and SiO_2 ($n \approx 0.2$) (hereafter "composite film") as high refractive index film and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films which have relatively low refractive index such as Al_2O_3 and TiO_2 films, is disposed on an angled plane 3 in the same glass material 2.

TABLE 6

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.635$
1st layer	Al_2O_3 25 nm
2nd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
3rd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
4th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
5th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
6th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
7th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
8th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
9th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
10th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
11th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
12th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
13th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
14th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.635$

TABLE 6-continued

Film thickness	
15th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
16th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
17th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
18th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
19th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
20th layer	TiO_2 60 nm
21st layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
22nd layer	TiO_2 60 nm
23rd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
24th layer	Al_2O_3 25 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.635$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.04$ ($n = 0.2$)

TABLE 7

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.635$
1st layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
2nd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 127 nm
3rd layer	TiO_2 127 nm
4th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
5th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
6th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
7th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
8th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
9th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
10th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
11th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
12th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
13th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
14th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
15th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
16th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
17th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
18th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
19th layer	TiO_2 127 nm
20th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
21st layer	TiO_2 127 nm
22nd layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 60 nm
23rd layer	TiO_2 127 nm
24th layer	Al_2O_3 35 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.635$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.04$ ($n = 0.2$)

The reflection film 6 shown in Tables 6 and 7 is a 24-layer film.

Triangular prisms 7 and 8 are disposed on both sides of the glass material 2, and they are respectively bonded to the glass material 2. The polarization beam splitter film 4 and the reflection film 6 are disposed on the angled plane 3 of the glass material 2.

FIG. 2 shows the dependence of the p-s phase difference of the reflected light on the incident angle at the polarization beam splitter film 4 comprising a multi-layer film, and FIG. 3 shows the dependence of the p-s phase difference of the reflected light on the incident angle at the reflection film 6. FIG. 4 shows the total p-s phase difference of the reflected light at the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film, in other words, the dependence on the incident angle of the light reflected on the disk entering the photo detector. In FIG. 2, the light incident angle is plotted along the abscissa, and this is the angle created between a normal plane 3 of the polarization beam splitter film 4 and the reflecting plane 5 of the reflection film 6. The angle created between a normal plane 3 of the reflection film 6 and the reflecting plane 5 of the reflection film 6 is plotted along the abscissa.

It is apparent from FIGS. 2, 3, and 4 that the p-s phase difference at the polarization beam splitter film 4 is -10° to $+10^\circ$ (prior art: -50° to $+40^\circ$) when the light incident angle is -45° against the prism 8, -45° to $+45^\circ$ against the prism 7, and -45° to $+45^\circ$ against the prism 8, compared to the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film of the prior art comprising only multiple dielectric

layers shown in FIG. 13. The p-s phase difference of the reflection film is -20° to $+10^\circ$ (prior art: -50° to $+40^\circ$), and the p-s phase difference of the light entering the photo detector is -35° to $+20^\circ$ (prior art: -50° to $+50^\circ$). The p-s phase difference may accordingly be reduced.

As for the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , $n \approx 0.2$ is used as an example. The same characteristics can be achieved as long as n is $0.1 < n < 0.5$.

Although it is not illustrated, it is apparent that the dependence of transmittance and reflectance on the incident angle is smaller because the refractive index n is large, and that high transmittance can be achieved because the absorption coefficient k is small.

Desirable phase characteristics can be thus achieved because a multi-layer film of a dielectric film and metal film basically complement mutual characteristics. Specifically, the dielectric film has no absorption loss in the film and its transmittance and reflectance can be freely adjusted by changing the composition of multiple materials, but its optical characteristics such as phase difference largely differ depending on the light incident angle. On the other hand, the optical characteristics of the metal film do not relatively change even the light incident angle changes because of its large refractive index, but it is difficult to achieve high transmittance with the metal film due to its large absorption coefficient. Accordingly, transmittance and reflectance can be freely adjusted, and dependence on light incident angle can be made smaller by alternately layering dielectric and metal films with complementary mutual characteristics. In the present invention, the composite film consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 is employed instead of a simple metal film. This realizes a high refractive index n and a low absorption coefficient k for enabling a highly efficient polarization beam splitter film and reflection film.

The refractive index and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film, consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , in the polarization beam splitter film, affect the dependence of the p-s phase difference of the reflected light on the incident angle as shown in FIGS. 2 to 4. As mentioned above, larger refractive index n and a smaller absorption coefficient k are preferred for the composite film, and to be more specific, $n \approx 2.2$ and $k \approx 0.3$ are desirable. This is because if $n < 2.2$, the p-s phase difference of the light entering the photo detector may not fall within -20° to $+20^\circ$, the essential prerequisite for desirable reproduction from recorded magneto-optical disks. If $k > 0.3$, efficiency may fall.

In this exemplary embodiment, the angle of the glass material 2 is set to approximately 45° ; however, the p-s phase difference characteristics of the reflected light related to the incident angle can be improved over those of a conventional multi-layer film as long as the angle of the glass material 2 is set within 35° to 55° and the above multi-layer film of the present invention is disposed on the angled plane 3 and the angled plane 5 which is approximately parallel to the angled plane 3.

Second Exemplary Embodiment
FIG. 5 shows a simplified sectional view of an optical pickup in a second exemplary embodiment of the present invention employing a prism in the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The prism in accordance with the first exemplary embodiment of the present invention is built into the optical pickup for magneto-optical disk shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B. This exemplary embodiment thus achieves improved reproduction from recorded magneto-optical disks by reducing the p-s phase difference.

Third Exemplary Embodiment
FIG. 6 shows a prism which is employed in an optical pickup for DVDs in a third exemplary embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 7 shows basic performance of the prism in this exemplary embodiment, i.e. transmittance of a polarization beam splitter film against p-polarized light.

As shown in FIG. 6, a prism 50 comprises a parallelogram-shaped glass material 51 having an approximate 45° cross-section. A polarization beam splitter film 53 comprising a multi-layer of a composite film made of Si and SiO_2 ($n \approx 0.2$) and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films such as Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Y_2O_3 , and TiO_2 films, shown in Table 8 and Table 9, is disposed on an angled plane 52 of the glass material 51.

TABLE 8

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.51$
1st layer	Al_2O_3 45 nm
2nd layer	SiO_2 75 nm
3rd layer	TiO_2 80 nm
4th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
5th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
6th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
7th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
8th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
9th layer	SiO_2 100 nm
10th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
11th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
12th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
13th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
14th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
15th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
16th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
17th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
18th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
19th layer	SiO_2 75 nm
20th layer	TiO_2 80 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.51$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.17$ ($n = 0.2$)

TABLE 9

Film thickness	
Substrate	$n = 1.51$
1st layer	TiO_2 31 nm
2nd layer	SiO_2 65 nm
3rd layer	SiO_2 65 nm
4th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
5th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
6th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
7th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
8th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
9th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
10th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
11th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
12th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
13th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
14th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
15th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
16th layer	SiO_2 65 nm
17th layer	TiO_2 65 nm
18th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 65 nm
19th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 65 nm
20th layer	$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$ 65 nm
Substrate	$n = 1.51$

$\text{Si} + \text{SiO}_2$, $n = 1.5$, $k = 0.08$ ($n = 0.2$)

The polarization beam splitter film 53 shown in Tables 8 and 9 consists of a 20-layer film.
A hologram diffraction grating 55 is disposed on an angled plane 54 which is approximately parallel to the

angled plane 53 in the same glass material 51. A reflection film 56 made of Ag is disposed on the hologram diffraction grating 55.

Triangular prisms 57 and 58 are disposed on both sides of the glass material 51, and they are respectively bonded through the polarization beam splitter film 53 and the reflection film 56.

FIG. 7 shows changes of the transmittance of the p-polarized light according to the light incident angle of the polarization beam splitter film 53 comprising a multi-layer film of the present invention. The transmittance of the polarization beam splitter film 53 is 79% to 90% (incident angle: 45° to 77°). It is apparent that the transmittance is stabilized at small transmittance compared to that of the prior art, as shown in FIG. 14, which is 50% to 100%.

In FIG. 7, the light incident angle is plotted along the abscissa, and this is the angle created between the normal angled plane 53 of the polarization beam splitter film 53 and the entering light.

As for the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , " $n=0.27$ " is used as an example. The same characteristics can be achieved as long as n is $0.4<n<0.5$.

Stabilized transmittance for the p-polarized light regardless of the incident angle can be achieved because a multi-layer film of a dielectric film and metal film basically compensates mutual characteristics, as already explained in the first exemplary embodiment. In addition, high refractive index n and low absorption coefficient k can be achieved by employing a composite film consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , instead of a single metal film.

The refractive index and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film, consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , affect the dependence of the p-s phase difference of the reflected light on the incident angle as shown in FIG. 7. A larger refractive index n and smaller absorption coefficient k for a composite film are preferred, and to be more specific, $n=2.8$, $k=0.3$ are desirable.

Since the hologram diffraction grating 55 is disposed on the angled plane 54 which is approximately parallel to the angled plane 53 of the glass material 51, the optical distance between the hologram optical element and the photo detector can be made longer than that in the prior art shown in FIGS. 11A and 11B, enabling the reduction of the diffraction angle θ of the hologram diffraction grating 55. This allows broader pitch of the hologram pattern for facilitating the creation of hologram grating in production.

Furthermore, the dependence of reflectance on the incident angle can be reduced and high reflectance can be achieved by using Ag for the metal film of the reflection film. By providing a patterned reflection film at least on the hologram diffraction grating 55, peeling of the reflection film can be suppressed and desirable optical pickup can be achieved, in spite of poor adhesivity of the reflection film to the glass material.

This exemplary embodiment employs a parallel-hologram-shaped glass material 51 having an approximate 45° cross-section. However, the transmittance of p-polarized light depending on the incident angle can be stabilized compared to the representative parallel prism using a multi-layer film of the prior art, as long as the angle θ is between 35° to 55° by disposing the multi-layer film 53 on the angled plane 54, the hologram diffraction grating 55 on the angled plane 54 approximately parallel to the angled plane 54, and the reflection film 56 on the hologram diffraction grating 55.

Fourth Exemplary Embodiment

FIG. 8 shows a simplified sectional view of an optical system of an optical pickup in a fourth exemplary embodiment of the present invention employing a prism in accordance with the third exemplary embodiment of the present invention. In this exemplary embodiment, a prism in the third exemplary embodiment is mounted on the transparent substrate 109 without the hologram diffraction grating 120 of the optical pickup shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B. At measuring the characteristics for reproduction of DVDs employing the optical pickup of this exemplary embodiment, desirable reproduction has been achieved due to the increase in light efficiency by stabilizing the p-polarized light transmittance against the incident angle compared to the optical pickup of the prior art.

Fifth Exemplary Embodiment

FIG. 9 shows a sectional view of a parallel prism having an approximate 45° cross-section, employed in a pickup for DVDs in a fifth exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

As shown in FIG. 9, a prism 70 comprises a glass material 71 having an approximate parallel-hologram cross-section and a glass material 76 having an approximate triangular cross-section. The refractive index n of the glass material 71 having an approximate parallel-hologram cross-section is 1.6. A polarization beam splitter film 73 comprising a multi-layer film of a composite film made of Si and SiO_2 ($n=0.27$), and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films such as Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Y_2O_3 , and TiO_2 , films shown in Table 8 and Table 9, is disposed on an angled plane 72 of the glass material 71. The polarization beam splitter film 73 shown in Tables 8 and 9 consists of a 20-layer film.

A hologram diffraction grating 75 is disposed on an angled plane 74 approximately parallel to the angled plane 72 in the same glass material 71.

Triangular prism 76 is disposed on the side of the polarization beam splitter film 73 on the glass material 71, and is bonded through the polarization beam splitter film 73. The effect of employing the multi-layer film for the polarization beam splitter film 73 in this exemplary embodiment is the same as that in the second exemplary embodiment, and thus the explanation for the effect is omitted here.

As for the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film and reflection film consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , " $n=0.27$ " is used as an example. The same characteristics can be achieved as long as n is $0.4<n<0.5$.

The refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in the polarization beam splitter film 73, consisting of a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , affect the dependence of the p-s phase difference of the reflected light on the incident angle as shown in FIG. 7. A larger refractive index n and smaller absorption coefficient k for a composite film are preferred, and to be more specific, $n=2.8$, $k=0.3$ are desirable, as explained in the third exemplary embodiment. Since the hologram grating is disposed on the angled plane 74 which is approximately parallel to the angled plane 72 of the glass material 71, the optical distance between the hologram grating 75 and the photo detector can be made longer than that in the prior art shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B, enabling the reduction of the diffraction angle θ of the hologram grating. This allows broader pitch of the hologram pattern for facilitating the creation of hologram grating in production. This is also the same as the third exemplary embodiment.

The fifth exemplary embodiment may not require the reflection film 56 and triangular prism 58 which are

employed in the third exemplary embodiment because the angle of the glass material 71 is approximately 45° and its refractive index is 1.6 in this exemplary embodiment for achieving desirable reflection characteristics for reflection on the glass material 71/air surface. Desirable reflection characteristics can be achieved when the refractive index n of the glass material 71 is $n=1.6$.

Sixth Exemplary Embodiment

FIG. 10 shows a simplified sectional view of the optical system of the optical pickup in a sixth exemplary embodiment of the present invention employing a prism of the fifth exemplary embodiment of the present invention. In this exemplary embodiment, the prism in the fifth exemplary embodiment is mounted on the transparent substrate 109 without the hologram grating 120 of the optical pickup shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B. At measuring the characteristics for reproduction of DVDs employing the optical pickup of this exemplary embodiment, desirable reproduction has been achieved due to the increase in light efficiency by stabilizing the p-polarized light transmittance against the incident angle, compared to the optical pickup of the prior art.

As described above, the prism and the optical pickup employing such prism of the present invention greatly reduces the p-s phase difference and achieves desirable reproduction without increasing the dependence of the reflectance and transmittance on the incident angle.

Since the hologram grating is disposed on the parallel plane in the prism of the present invention and the optical pickup employing such prism, the optical distance between the hologram optical element and the photo detector can be made longer than that in the prior art, enabling the reduction of the diffraction angle θ of the hologram diffraction grating. This allows broader pitch of the hologram pattern for facilitating the creation of hologram grating in production. Furthermore, the dependence of reflectance on the incident angle can be reduced and high reflectance can be achieved by using Ag for the metal film of the reflection film. By also providing a patterned reflection film at least on the hologram diffraction grating, peeling of the reflection film can be suppressed and desirable optical pickup can be achieved, in spite of poor adhesivity of the reflection film to the glass material.

Desirable reflection characteristics for reflection on the glass material 71/air surface can also be achieved by employing a parallel prism having an approximate 45° cross-section and setting the refractive index n to 1.6 or above.

What is claimed is:

1. A prism for optical pickups, comprising:
 - a glass material having an approximate parallel-hologram cross-section and having a first angled plane and a second angled plane approximately parallel to each other;
 - a multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and
 - a multi-layer film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and
2. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
 - a first triangular prism bonded to said multi-layer film formed on said first angled plane of the glass material; and
3. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 1, wherein said dielectric films include at least one of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Y_2O_3 , and TiO_2 .
4. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 1, wherein said composite film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material has a refractive index $n=2.8$ and an absorption coefficient $k=0.3$, and said composite film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material has a refractive index $n=2.8$ and an absorption coefficient $k=0.3$.
5. An optical pickup comprising the prism of claim 1, wherein said multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material is a polarization beam splitter and said multi-layer film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material is a reflection film.
6. An optical pickup as defined in claim 5, wherein the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film in a polarization beam splitter are $n=2.8$ and $k=0.3$, and the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film reflection film are $n=2.8$ and $k=0.3$.
7. A prism for optical pickups, comprising:
 - a glass material having an approximate parallel-hologram cross-section and having a first angled plane and a second angled plane approximately parallel to each other; and
 - a hologram diffraction grating disposed on said second angled plane;
8. A multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$ and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and
9. A multi-layer film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$ and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and
10. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 7, wherein the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the composite film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material are $n=2.8$ and $k=0.3$, and the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the film formed on said second angled plane of the glass material are $n=2.8$ and $k=0.3$.
11. An optical pickup, comprising:
 - a glass material having an approximate parallel-hologram cross-section and having a first angled plane and a second angled plane approximately parallel to each other; and
 - a hologram diffraction grating disposed on said second angled plane;
12. A multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and
13. A multi-layer film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $n<0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and

a multi-layer film disposed on said hologram diffraction grating on said second angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising at least one;

wherein said multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material is a polarization beam splitter and said multi-layer film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material is a reflection film;

12. An optical pickup employing a parallel prism, comprising:

a multi-layer film disposed on an angled plane of a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section, said multi-layer film being a polarization beam splitter and comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $x \leq 0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films;

a hologram diffraction grating disposed on an angled plane of the same glass material approximately parallel to the angled plane on which said polarized beam splitter is disposed; and

a multi-layer film disposed on said hologram diffraction grating, said multi-layer film comprising one of a single metal film and multi-layer metal and dielectric film.

13. An optical pickup as defined in claim 12, wherein the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the metal film in the polarization beam splitter are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$.

14. An optical pickup as defined in claim 12, wherein the single metal film is an Ag reflection film.

15. An optical pickup as defined in claim 14, wherein the reflection film is patterned and at least disposed on said hologram diffraction grating.

16. A prism for optical pickups, comprising:

a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section and having a first angled plane and a second angled plane approximately parallel to each other, and a hologram diffraction grating disposed on said second angled plane;

a multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $x \leq 0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and

an Ag film disposed on said hologram diffraction grating

on said second angled plane of the glass material.

17. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 16, further comprising a first triangular prism bonded to said multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material.

18. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 16, wherein said dielectric films include at least one of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Y_2O_3 , and TiO_2 .

19. A prism for optical pickups as defined in claim 16, wherein said composite film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material has a refractive index $n \geq 2.8$ and an absorption coefficient $k \leq 0.3$.

20. An optical pickup, comprising:

a glass material having an approximate parallelogram cross-section and having a first angled plane and a second angled plane approximately parallel to each other, and a hologram diffraction grating disposed on said second angled plane;

a multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material, said multi-layer film comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $x \leq 0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and

an Ag film disposed on said hologram diffraction grating on said second angled plane of the glass material.

wherein said multi-layer film disposed on said first angled plane of the glass material is a polarization beam splitter, and said Ag film disposed on said second angled plane of the glass material is a reflection film.

21. An optical pickup as defined in 20, wherein the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of the metal film in the polarization beam splitter are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$.

22. An optical pickup employing a parallel prism, comprising:

a multi-layer film disposed on an angled plane of a parallelogram-shaped glass material having an approximate 45° cross-section, said multi-layer film being a polarization beam splitter and comprising a composite film comprising a mixture of Si and SiO_2 , wherein $x \leq 0.5$, and multiple layers of multiple dielectric films; and

a hologram diffraction grating disposed on an angled plane of the same glass material approximately parallel to the angled plane on which said polarized beam splitter is disposed,

wherein the refractive index of the glass material is $n \geq 1.6$.

23. An optical pickup as defined in claim 22, wherein the refractive index n and absorption coefficient k of a metal film in the polarization beam splitter are $n \geq 2.8$ and $k \leq 0.3$.

* * * * *

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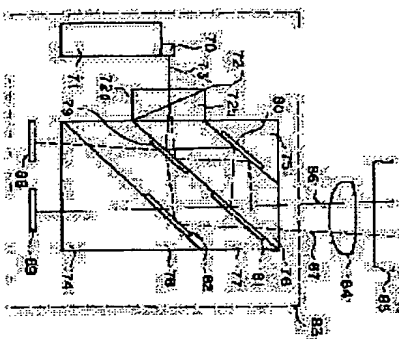
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(54) MULTIBEAM GENERATING METHOD AND MULTIBEAM OPTICAL PICKUP

(57)Abstract

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a small multibeam optical pickup at low cost capable of generating plural beams from a semiconductor laser having one light emitting point and simultaneously reproducing plural tracks.

SOLUTION: This optical pickup is composed of a semiconductor laser 70 having one light emitting point, a parallel plane plate wedge member 72 oppositely joining wedge-like birefringent members to each other, a laminated prism 74 integrally forming plural parallel plane plates, having a grating in one part of the joined surface, a polarizing beam splitter 82 in the other part of the joined surface and plural photodetectors and they are formed in one package. Consequently, the parts from the semiconductor laser to the photodetectors are integrally built-up and a multibeam generating method and a small multibeam optical pickup at low cost are obtained.



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(72) 発明者 後藤 博志

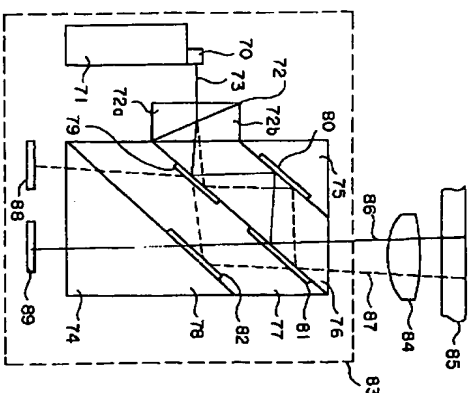
大阪府門真市大字門真1006番地 松下電器産業株式会社内
(74) 代理人 井理士 滝本 智之 (外1名)

(54) [発明の名称] ワルチビーム生成方法及びワルチビーム光ビシクアツツ

(57) [要約]

[課題] 一つの発光点を有する半導体レーザから複数のビームを生成し、複数のトラックを同時に再生することのできる小型で低コストなワルチビーム光ビシクアツツを提供することを目的とする。

[解決手段] 本発明の光ビシクアツツは、一つの発光点を有する半導体レーザ70と、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材72と、複数の平行平板を一体に成型し、その接合面の一部にグラレーインツとその接合面他の一部に偏光ビームスプリッタ82とを有するラミレートプリズム74と、複数の受光素子とを一つのパッケージに形成して構成した。よって、半導体レーザから受光素子までを一体に組み込むことができ、小型で低コストのワルチビーム生成方法及びワルチビーム光ビシクアツツが得られる。



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】1つの発光点から出射した1本のレーザ光を、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材に透過させるスラブと、複数の平行平板が一体に成型されたラミレートプリズム部材であって、その接合面の一部に設けられたグレーティングを反射するスラブと、その接合面の一部に設けられた偏光ビームスプリッタを透過、または反射するスラブと、前記偏光ビームスプリッタを透過したビームと、前記偏光ビームスプリッタを反射したビームとを互いに別々の受光素子に受光するスラブとを有し、前記1本のレーザ光を前記平行平板くさび部材により2本のビームに分割し、さらに前記グレーティングにより2本のビームをそれぞれ3分割し合計6本のビームとして前記ラミレートプリズム部材より出射させ、被検出面から反射した入射光をその偏光面に応じて前記偏光ビームスプリッタにより3本ずつ2つのグループに分離して前記受光素子により受光することを特徴とするマルチビーム生成方法。

【請求項2】1つの発光点を有するレーザ光源と、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材と、複数の平行平板を一体に成型し、その接合面の一部にグレーティングと、その接合面他の一部に偏光ビームスプリッタとを有するラミレートプリズム部材と、複数の受光素子とを有し、前記レーザ光源の1本のビームを前記平行平板くさび部材により2本のビームに分割し、さらに前記グレーティングにより2本のビームをそれぞれ3分割し合計6本のビームとして前記ラミレートプリズム部材より出射させ、被検出面から反射した入射光をその偏光面に応じて前記偏光ビームスプリッタにより3本ずつ2つのグループに分離して前記受光素子により受光することを特徴とするマルチビーム光ビッ

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は、光学的情報記録媒体に対して複数のトラックから同時に情報を再生するためのマルチビーム生成方法及びマルチビーム光ビッ

【0002】

【従来の技術】 近年、レーザ光により光学的情報記録媒体（光ディスク）上の情報を再生する装置は著しい飛躍をしている。また、コンピュータで取り扱うデータも、コンパクトから音楽、静止画像、動画と進展するにつれ、データ量も増大している。それに伴って、光ディスクの情報再生装置からホストコンピュータにデータを転送するスピードの高速化が要求されている。データ転送レートを高速度化するために、従来は光ディスクの回転数を上げる手法がもっぱら行われていた。

【0003】 しかしながらこの方法では、光ディスクを

回転駆動するモータの回転数を大幅に上げるためにモータを大型化しなければならないとか回転数の上昇に伴って光ディスクの振動や面歪れが大きくなりサーボ系の安定化が困難になる等の問題が生じている。

【0004】 そこで、情報の読み取りを行う光ビッングラフで複数のレーザビームを発生させ、光ディスクに対して複数のトラックから同時に情報の再生を行うマルチビーム光ビッングラフが提案されている。この方法では、モータを大型化する必要もなく、さらに回転数の上昇に伴うディスクの振動や面歪れを抑えることが可能であるため、有望視されている。

【0005】 以下、図に基づき従来のマルチビーム光ビッングラフの技術を説明する。図3は従来のマルチビーム光ビッングラフの構成図である。図において、半導体レーザ40には2個のレーザチップ41、42があり、2本のビームを発生している。これらの2本のビームはコリメートレンズ2により平行光となり、グレーティング3により3ビーム化され合計6本のビームがハーフトラミ8を通り、対物レンズ9により集光され光ディスク10に照射される。光ディスク10からの反射光は、再び対物レンズ9を通りハーフトラミ8で反射され、検出レンズ43、シフトリカルレンズ44を通り、受光素子45に入射する。フォーカス検出は公知の非点収差法により、トラック検出は公知の3ビーム法により行われる。

【0006】 図4は光ディスク上のトラックとスポットとの関係を示した図である。3ビーム法のメインスポット27、及び30はトラック32、33の中央に位置し、サイドスポット26、29はトラック33、32の右に、サイドスポット28、31はトラック33、32の左に、それぞれ位置している。

【0007】 情報の再生はメインスポット27、30によって行われる。フォーカス検出はメインスポット27により、トラック検出はサイドスポット26、28により行われる。また、半導体レーザ40の2個のレーザチップ41、42の間隔が150μmであり、光ディスク上のメインスポット27、30の間隔は光学系の倍倍率が約1/5なので30μmになる。メインスポット27とサイドスポット28との間隔は約10μmである。そして、メインスポット27、30の存在により光ディスクの2つのトラックから同時に情報を再生することが可能である。

【0008】 しかしながら、光ディスクの偏心によりトラックが傾斜を起すこと、メインスポットの一方はトラックセンターボ制御により常にトラック中心に位置するが、他方のメインスポットはトラックずれを引き起こし再生信号が低下するという問題がある。

【0009】 図5は光ディスクの偏心によるスポット位置ずれの説明図である。図5において、光ディスクに偏心がない時がトラック32、33であり、2つのメイン

スポット36、37は各々トラック32、33（実線表示）の中心に位置している。しかし、光ディスクに偏心がある時にはトラック34、35（点線表示）にずれた位置にあり、一方のメインスポット38はトラックセンターボ制御により常にトラック34の中心に位置するが、もう一方のメインスポット39はトラック35よりオフトラックした位置にある。このため、メインスポット39により情報を再生すると信号が低下する。

【0010】 この偏心の問題を解消するためにマルチビームのメインスポット相互の間隔を定める方法が提案された。図6はメインスポット相互の間隔を定めた従来のトラックとスポットとの配置図である。図6において、メインスポット27、30の間隔を定め、3ビーム法のメインスポット27、30とサイドスポット26、28、29、31との間隔よりもマルチビームのメインスポット27、30相互の間隔を定める方法が考えられる。図の例では、メインスポット27とサイドスポット26、28とが1つのレーザ光源からの光であり、メインスポット30とサイドスポット29、31とが他方のレーザ光源からの光である。メインスポット27、30の相互間隔は光ディスク10の偏心による再生信号の低下が十分無視できる5μmに設定されている。

【0011】 図7は図6のマルチビームの受光素子21、24、46とスポット26〜31との関係を示す図である。図において、非点収差法によるフォーカス信号を検出するための4分割受光素子46、3ビーム法によるトラック信号を検出するための2つの受光素子21、22が一枚の基板上に配置されている。

【0012】 しかしながら、スポットの相互間隔が狭いため受光素子21、22上に2つのレーザチップ41、42を光源とするサイドスポット（26と29及び28と31）が照射されているため、フォーカス信号、トラック信号、再生信号が正確に検出できない問題が生じる。さらに、半導体レーザ40に2個のレーザチップ41、42を搭載して2本のビームを発生させる方法はコストが高いという問題がある。そこで、一つの半導体レーザと複屈折材料からなるくさび部材からマルチビームを生成し、偏光ビームスプリッタによりマルチビームを分離して受光素子に入射させることにより前述のレーザチッングの問題を解決する方法が提案されている。

【0013】 図8はくさび部材を使った従来のマルチビーム光ビッングラフの構成図である。図8において、半導体レーザ40から一本のレーザビームが発生している。このビームはコリメートレンズ2により平行光となり、グレーティング3により3本のビーム41に変換され、複屈折くさび部材5により常光線7（点線表示）と異常光線6（実線表示）に分離され合計6本のビームになる。

【0014】 複屈折くさび部材5の材質には水晶が使用される。その水晶の変長780nmの常光線7に対して

屈折率は1.5387384、異常光線6に対する屈折率は1.5476658である。半導体レーザ40からビームの偏光面を45度回転させて複屈折くさび部材5に入射させると、複屈折くさび部材5の中でレーザ光は常光線7と異常光線6とに分かれて進行し、常光線7に対する屈折率と異常光線6とに対する屈折率が異なるため、複屈折くさび部材5から出射する際に2つの光線に分離されて異なる方向に出射することになる。例えば、くさびの頂角を10度と設定すると分離される2つのビームのなす角度は0.90度になり、対物レンズ9の焦点距離を5mmとすると2つのスポットの間隔は4.7μmになる。このスポット間隔であれば、図6に示したように、光ディスク10の偏心による再生信号の低下を十分無視する事ができる。

【0015】 複屈折くさび部材5から2つの光線に分離され合計6本のビームとして出射した後、ハーフトラミ8で反射し対物レンズ9で集光されて光ディスク10のスポットに焦点を結ぶ。

【0016】 光ディスク10からの反射光は、再び対物レンズ9を通りハーフトラミ8を通過し、検出レンズ11を通り、偏光ビームスプリッタ12により、その入射光線の偏光面に応じて常光線7は反射され異常光線6は透過し受光素子13に入射する。フォーカス検出は常光線15と異常光線14とのスポットサイズ法により行われ、トラック検出は公知の3ビーム法により行われる。

【0017】 前述の図6において、3ビーム法のメインスポット27、及び30はトラック32、33の中央に位置し、サイドスポット26、29はトラックの右に、サイドスポット28、31はトラックの左に位置している。情報の再生はメインスポット27、30によって行われる。フォーカス検出はメインスポット27により、トラック検出はサイドスポット26、28により行われる。

【0018】 図9は受光素子13上のスポットの配置を示した図である。異常光線14を検出する受光素子は20、21、22であり、常光線15を検出する受光素子は23、24、25である。受光素子20と受光素子23はそれぞれ3分割され、20-A、20-B、20-C、及び23-A、23-B、23-Cより構成される。メインスポット27、30の各々の集光点は受光素子13の前後にあるため、フォーカス信号を（20-A）+（20-C）-（20-B）-（23-A）+（23-C）-（23-B）により得ることができる。

【0019】 またトラック信号は、21-22により得られる。

【0020】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】 しかしながら、以上に説明した各従来の方法は、半導体レーザの光をコリメートレンズにより平行光に変換してから対物レンズに入射

させる無関係である。そのため射出光学系にも集光レンズが必要になり、光ビックアップが大小型化ししかもコストアップになるという問題がある。

【0021】さらに、半導体レーザに2個のレーザチップを搭載し2本のビームを発生させる方法はコストが高くなるという問題がある。

【0022】また、従来の光ビックアップは半導体レーザや光学部品やセンサが別々に配置されているため光ビックアップが大小型化するという問題がある。

【0023】以上のように、有関係の射出光学系を用い、小型で低コストなマルチビーム光ビックアップが要求されている。

【0024】本発明は上記従来の問題点を解決するもので、1つの発光点を有する半導体レーザから複数のビームを生成し、複数のトラップを同時に再生することのできる小型で低コストなマルチビーム光ビックアップを提供することを目的とする。

【0025】

【課題を解決するための手段】本発明の光ビックアップは、発光点が1つの半導体レーザと、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材と、複数の平行平板を一体に成型したラミネートガラス部材と、受光素子とを一つのパッケージに形成して構成したものである。

【0026】以上の構成により、半導体レーザから受光素子までを一体に組み込むことができるので、小型で低コストのマルチビーム光ビックアップが得られる。

【0027】

【発明の実施の形態】本発明の請求項1に記載の発明は、1つの発光点を有するレーザ光源と、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材と、複数の平行平板を一体に成型し、その接合面の一部にグレーディングと、その接合面の他の一部に偏光ビームスプリッタとを有するラミネートガラス部材と、複数の受光素子とを有し、レーザ光源の1本のビームを平行平板くさび部材により2本のビームに分割し、さらにグレーディングにより2本のビームをそれぞれ3分割し合計6本のビームとしてラミネートガラス部材より射出させ、被射出面から反射した入射光をその偏光面に応じて偏光ビームスプリッタにより3本ずつ2つのグループに分離して受光素子により受光することとしたものであり、半導体レーザから受光素子までを一体に組み込むことができるので、小型で低コストのマルチビーム光ビックアップを提供することができる。

【0028】以下、本発明の実施の形態について、図面を用いて説明する。

（実施の形態1）図1は本発明における光ビックアップの構造を示す図である。図において、半導体レーザ70は保持部材71上にマウントされ、半導体レーザ70からのレーザビーム73はくさび状の複屈折部材を互いに

逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材72により常光線87と異常光線86との2本のビームに分割される。

【0029】ここで、平行平板くさび部材72の材質には水晶が使用される。波長780nmのレーザ光の常光線87に対するその水晶の屈折率は1.5387384、異常光線86に対するその水晶の屈折率は1.5476658である。また、平行平板くさび部材72のうち第1の平行平板くさび部材72aの結晶配向に基づき光学軸は紙面と垂直方向に、第2の平行平板くさび部材72bの結晶配向に基づき光学軸は紙面の上下方向にそれぞれ形成されている。

【0030】今、半導体レーザ70から射出するビームの偏光面を紙面の垂直方向から上下方向に向かつて45度回転させて平行平板くさび部材72に入射させると、平行平板くさび部材72の中でレーザ光は常光線87と異常光線86とに分離して進行する。さらに光学軸の相違により、常光線87に対する屈折率と異常光線86とに対する屈折率が異なるため、第1の平行平板くさび部材72aから射出する時と、第2の平行平板くさび部材72bから射出する時とに2つの光線に屈折して分離し、異なる方向に射出することになる。例えば、くさびの頂角を5度に設定すると分離された2つのビームのなす角度は0.090度になり、対物レンズ84の焦点距離を3mmとすると2つのスポットの間隔は4.74μmになる。このスポット間隔であれば、図6に示したように、光ダイオード85の偏心による再生信号の低下を十分無視することができる。

【0031】分割された2本のビームはそれぞれ異線で示した異常光線86と常光線87としてラミネートガラス74に入射する。このラミネートガラス74は複数の平行平板75、76、77、78が接合された構造であって、その接合面の一部に光学的なコーティングがなされている。

【0032】入射した2本のビームは、まず、全反射コーティング79により反射し、次にグレーディング80で再び反射したとき、グレーディング80によりさらに3本のビームに分かれて合計6本のビームになる。さらに、各ビームはビームスプリッタコーティング81によりその一部が反射してラミネートガラス74を射出し、対物レンズ84により集光され光ダイオード85に読み取りスポットを形成する。

【0033】光ダイオード85のスポットからの反射光は、対物レンズ84により再び集光されてラミネートガラス74に入射する。入射光はビームスプリッタコーティング81を透過し、偏光ビームスプリッタ82に達する。偏光ビームスプリッタ82では入射光の有するその偏光面の相違（即ち、平行平板くさび部材72により2本のビームに分割された時の偏光面）により、異常光線86は偏光ビームスプリッタ82を透過し異常線89の受光素子93～95に入射する。他方、常光線87は偏

光ビームスプリッタ82を反射し全反射コーティング79により再び反射して異常線88の受光素子90～92に入射する。

【0034】トラップ射出は公知の3ビーム法により、フォーカス射出は公知のスポットサイズ法により行われ、図2は本発明における受光素子の配置図である。常光線87を受光する異常線88の受光素子90～92には3ビーム法のスポットサイズ法を受光する受光素子90、92およびスポットサイズ法の受光素子93、95および3分割受光素子91がある。同様に、異常光線86を受光する異常線89の受光素子93～95には3ビーム法のスポットサイズ法を受光する受光素子93、95および3分割受光素子94がある。フォーカス信号は（91B-（91A+91C）-（94B-（94A+94C））より生成される。

【0035】以上に詳細に説明したように、本発明によれば、単発光点の半導体レーザ70を用いて、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材72により2本のビームを生成し、このマルチビームをラミネートガラス74を介して対物レンズ84に入射させ、2本のビームに基づき合計6本のビームによりビームスポットを光ダイオード上に形成するので、単発光点の半導体レーザ70により同時に2トラップをアプセスすることができる。

【0036】さらに、ラミネートガラス74と複屈折部材を用いた平行平板くさび部材72とが半導体レーザ70と対物レンズ84との光路中にあるため、対物レンズ84はこれらの各部材の厚みにより発生する表面収差を補正するように設計することにより、ほぼ無収差の光学系を得ることが可能になる。

【0037】また、偏光ビームスプリッタ82により異常光線86と常光線87とを完全に分離して6個の各々の受光素子90～95に光を入射することが可能になる。さらに、本発明によれば、半導体レーザ70から平行平板くさび部材72、ラミネートガラス74、および異常線88、89までを光ビックアップに一体に組み込むことが可能になり、マルチビーム光ビックアップが大小型化される。

【0038】

【発明の効果】以上の様に本発明によれば、発光点が一つの半導体レーザを用いて、くさび状の複屈折部材を互いに逆向きに接合した平行平板くさび部材により2本のビームを生成し、このマルチビームをラミネートガラスを介して対物レンズに入射させて、2つのスポットを光ダイオード上に形成する。

【0039】従って、単発光点レーザを使用して、同時に2本のトラップをアプセスすることができるので、光ダイオードの回転速度を増加することなく2倍のデー

タ点送料を実現することができ、省エネルギーと小型化とに効果的である。

【0040】また、従来の無関係の技術ではコリメートレンズと射出レンズ（集光レンズ）とを必要としたが、本発明によれば有関係の技術によりこれらのレンズが不要となるのに加え、半導体レーザから平行平板くさび部材、ラミネートガラス、および受光素子までを光ビックアップに一体に組み込むことが可能になり、マルチビーム光ビックアップが大小型化とコストダウンが実現される。

【0041】以上により、低コストでかつ小型化されたマルチビーム光ビックアップを提供することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明における光ビックアップの構造を示す図

【図2】本発明における受光素子の配置図

【図3】従来のマルチビーム光ビックアップの構成図

【図4】光ダイオード上のトラップとスポットとの関係を示した図

【図5】光ダイオードの偏心によるスポット位置ずれの説明

【図6】メインスポット相互の間隔を決めた従来のトラップとスポットの配置図

【図7】図6のマルチビームの受光素子とスポットとの関係を示す図

【図8】くさび部材を使った従来のマルチビーム光ビックアップの構成図

【図9】受光素子上のスポットの配置を示した図

【符号の説明】

2 コリメートレンズ

3 グレーディング

4 3本のビーム

5 複屈折くさび部材

6、14、86 異常光線

7、15、87 常光線

8 ハーフミラー

9、84 対物レンズ

10、85 光ダイオード

11 射出レンズ

12、82 偏光ビームスプリッタ

13、20、21、22、23、24、25、45、9

0、92、93、95受光素子

27、30、36、37、38、39 メインスポット

26、28、29、31 サイパススポット

32、33、34、35 トラップ

40、70 半導体レーザ

41、42 レーザチップ

43 射出レンズ

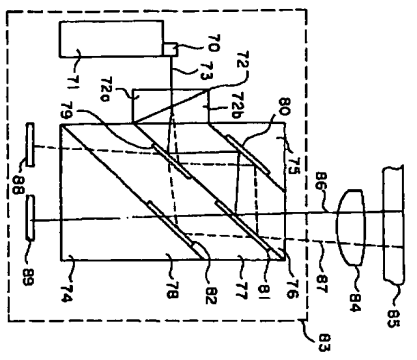
44 シリンダリカルレンズ

46 4分割受光素子

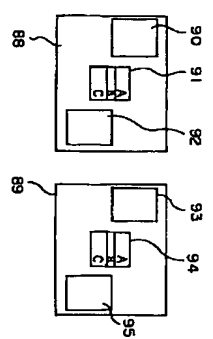
71 保持部材

- 9
- 72 平行平板くさび部材
- 72a 第1の平行平板くさび部材
- 72b 第2の平行平板くさび部材
- 73 レーザビーム
- 74 ラミネートガラス
- 75、76、77、78 平行平板

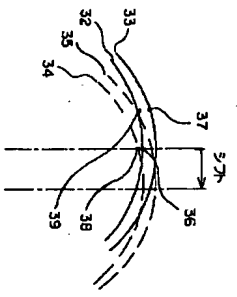
【図1】



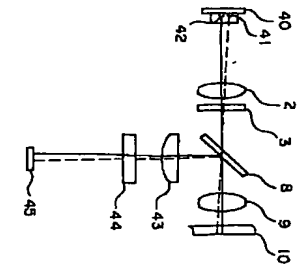
【図2】



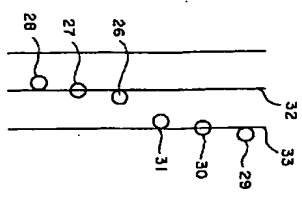
【図5】



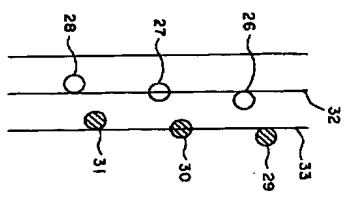
【図3】



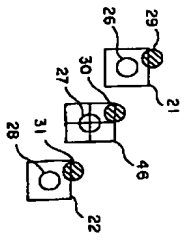
【図4】



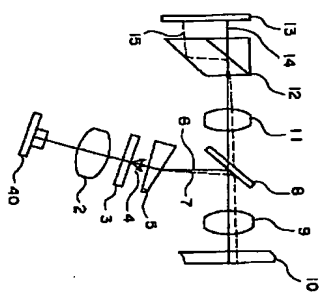
【図6】



【図7】



【図8】



【図9】

